

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Freight Depot

other names/site number 041-0020-0028 Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Freight Station

2. Location

street & number 110 North Cedar Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Abilene ☐ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Dickinson code 041 zip code 67410

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ramon P. Powers State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date July 14, 1993

Kansas State Historical Society

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property

County and St

**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: rail-related; train depot

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Commerce/Trade:**

Specialty Store, warehouse

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

Terra Cotta

roof Ceramic tile; Asphalt

other Glass; Metal

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

1928-1943

#### Significant Dates

1928-1929

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Underwood, Gilbert Stanley, Architect

Johnson, G.A. & Sons, Contractor

#### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Union Pacific Railroad  
Omaha, Nebraska

Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Freight Depot  
Name of Property

Dickins County, Kansas  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	14	654580	4308780
Zone	Easting	North	ing
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	North	ing
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Hagedorn -Krass, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date July 14, 1993

street & number 120 West Tenth telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Tim Geske

street & number 110 North Cedar Street telephone 913-263-7984

city or town Abilene state KS zip code 67410

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Freight Depot (c. 1928-1929) is located at 110 North Cedar in Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas (pop. 6,572). The one-story, buff brick and terra cotta, Spanish Colonial Revival depot is composed of two units: an eastern office unit (head house) with a red clay tile, gable roof and a western freight room and covered platform unit with a slightly pitched, gabled roof that is hidden by a continuous parapet. The building sits on a concrete foundation, terra cotta coping caps the various roof lines. The external integrity of the building is very high, maintaining its original form, decorative detailing and window and door openings. Some modifications have been made to the interior.

The freight depot was constructed just west of the passenger depot, at the intersection of Cedar and Second Streets. Both depots stand on the north side of the tracks. The Union Pacific Railroad tracks that bound the property to the south are active.

The building maintains the eastern elevation as its primary facade, the north elevation serves as a significant secondary elevation. The building measures 164 feet from east to west by 30 feet from north to south. The office area (head house) measures 32 feet from east to west by 30 feet from north to south, its eastern wall is the building's primary facade. The freight room measures 110 feet from east to west and 30 feet from north to south, the covered platform measures an additional 22 feet from east to south and maintains the standard 30 foot width dimensions used in the building.

A concrete platform covered by a metal canopy front the freight room and covered platform, running along the track side or south side of the building. The concrete platform measures 132 feet from east to west by 8 feet from north to south, the metal canopy is of similar dimension. The concrete platform and metal canopy are included in the nomination. An ell-shaped concrete platform and ramp extend 100 feet from the west side of the building, this improvement is not included in the boundary area of the nomination.

The eastern facade of the building is composed of a projecting pedimented entry pavilion flanked by a double stepped, parapetted unit. A single, 1/1 light fenestrates each recessed wall. Brick slip sills underscore these windows, no decorative attempt at lintel articulation is made. The wall plane is parapetted above the gable roof, terra cotta scrolls terminate the lowest step of each recessed wall. The double door entryway is surmounted by a single light transom. The double doors are of wood with brass fixtures. Four concrete steps approach the entry way, metal railing runs along either side. The Union Pacific Freight Station sign which sat atop the eastern wall of the freight room and was visible above the pedimented entry pavilion has been removed.

A tan, mottled beige, red, and blue terra cotta door surround accentuates the doorway. Blue and red panels supporting diamond shaped, mottled beige fleurons alternate with beige panels to compose the stiles of the terra cotta surround. "Union Pacific Freight Station" is cast into the door surround's mottled beige, terra cotta lintel. The red and blue Union Pacific Railroad shield of terra cotta surmounts the surround. The shield is contained within a gold and beige terra cotta cartouche

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which is flanked by cornucopias laden with red, green, blue, yellow and orange flowers and fruits. Two metal sconces project from the door surround at transom height.

Two sets of windows fenestrate the northern wall of the office area (head house). A tan, mottled beige, red, and blue terra cotta surround accentuates the pair of 6/6 double hung windows that fenestrate the eastern section of the wall. Blue and red panels supporting diamond shaped, mottled beige fleurons alternate with mottled beige panels to compose the stiles of the terra cotta surround. A frieze of diamond shapes with fleurons in their centers spans the recessed lintel of the terra cotta surround. A mottled beige, terra cotta columnette of the Corinthian order separates the two windows. A variation on the diamond and fleuron pattern decorates the columnette's shaft. A recessed brick panel stands beneath the window grouping, a red terra cotta diamond within a red terra cotta square is contained within a brick circle which accents the center of the panel.

Two, 1/1 double hung windows fenestrate the western section of the office area's northern wall. Brick slip sills underscore these windows, no decorative attempt at lintel articulation is made. Three windows of similar design fenestrate the southern wall of the office area.

The north and south elevations of the freight room and the extended covered platform are composed of six repeating bays. The one-bay, western elevation takes its form from this design as well. Each bay is composed of a freight door opening surmounted by a multi-paned, glass transom. Steel rolling doors fill the freight door openings in the five bays that comprised the freight room, the most western bay was originally conceived as a covered platform and had no doors. Today these openings have been filled in with wood and concrete block, and these materials have been painted the same color brown as the rolling steel doors. Panelled, brick pilasters frame each bay, these contain internal gutters which drain into the ground beneath the building. A recessed brick panel with a diamond design in the center surmounts each transom.

Concrete loading platforms abut the northern, southern, and western elevations, providing direct access to the building from North Second Street and track side. A flat roofed, metal canopy hangs above the concrete platform on the south side of the building.

The office area, shown on Underwood's 1928 drawings as the head house, contained an office, a cashier's room, and a toilet on the north side and a toilet, a record room, and a warm and cold room on the south side. A public space corridor centrally divided the two areas, a continuous counter divided the office area from the corridor. With the exception of the toilet on the north side and the warm and cold room on the south side, all other rooms in the head house have been gutted. The original counter has been removed, in its place, a counter from the passenger depot was installed. The floors in the head house are wood. This space now serves as the office and display area for Geske Interiors.

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Underwood's drawings show the five-bay freight room as an open area accessed by steel rolling doors, and a one-bay covered platform with three openings extending from the western wall of the freight room. As originally conceived, no doors were used for the covered platform openings. The freight room has been modified, the western wall has been knocked out and steel rolling doors have been installed on the western opening of the covered platform. The covered platform's northern and southern openings have been filled in with wood and concrete block, as has the transom that surmounts the southern opening. Multi-paned transomed windows surmount each door opening, these are part of the original design. The floors in the freight room and the covered platform are concrete. Underwood shows that a scale stood near the center of the freight room, this has been removed. The freight room and the covered platform are used by Geske Interiors for shop space and storage.

The Union Pacific closed the freight depot in the mid-1970s, shortly after passenger service was discontinued. Abilene Iron and Metal purchased the freight depot from Union Pacific in 1974. Gordon Davis, Jr. purchased the building in 1980. Davis sold the building to Tim Geske in November, 1987. Geske, a painting contractor, utilizes the space for his business, Geske Interiors. The Union Pacific retains ownership of the land that the freight depot stands on, Geske leases the land from the railroad.



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The Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Freight Depot (c. 1928-1929) is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C for its historical association with the growth and development of Abilene and for its architectural significance as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style depot type constructed by the Union Pacific Railroad in the 1920s. The brick and tile freight depot was designed by California architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood. Underwood designed a passenger depot of similar construction as part of the Abilene project, this building is extant and was listed on the National Register in 1992.

G. A. Johnson and Sons of Chicago constructed the passenger depot and the freight depot. The project was overseen by G. T. Kuntz of Denver, who served as the General Superintendent of Construction for the Union Pacific Railroad.

"Completion of the new Union Pacific freight and passenger stations provide a point of special interest in the business and citio-history of Abilene. Representing a steady past growth in railway traffic, as well as a promise of future stability and increase, the structures also exemplify the change from the conventional to the artistic in buildings designed first for utility- a change which manifests the new point of view of business generally. Art has been brought from the studio and is being embodied in the structural outlines of Main Street." (Abilene Daily Reflector, 28 June 1929)

The Union Pacific Railroad was incorporated as the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad by the legislature of the Territory of Kansas in 1855, although construction on the line did not begin until 1863. The charter was acquired by John Fremont and Samuel Hallett. During the eight years that followed its incorporation, the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad Company organized and sought purchasers for its securities. The legislature of the Territory of Kansas had granted fifty-one charters to railroad companies by 1861, but only one company had laid any track. The companies were largely designed to help promote settlement.

The Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 revitalized construction interest among the various companies which had received charters. Under the terms of this act, the Union Pacific Railroad was chartered to build westward from the 100th meridian in the territory of Nebraska to the west boundary of the territory of Nevada while the Central Pacific Railway, an existing California corporation, was to build eastward from the Pacific coast. The Pacific Railroad Act of 1864 amended the charter, restricting the Central Pacific Railway from extending more than 150 miles into Nevada.

In 1864, the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad was renamed the Union Pacific Railway Company Eastern Division. The company changed its name again in 1869 to the Kansas Pacific Railway Company, the line reached Denver in 1870. From Denver, the Kansas Pacific Railway built to Cheyenne, Wyoming over a subsidiary road, the Denver Pacific Railway. The main line of the Union Pacific Railway and the Central Pacific Railway met at Promontory, Utah in May, 1869.

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After a five year battle to gain control of the Kansas Pacific Railway, Jay Gould acquired the railroad in 1879. Gould combined the Kansas Pacific Railway with the Union Pacific Railway and the Denver Pacific Railway to form the Union Pacific Railway in 1880. The company went into receivership in 1893, and was reorganized into the present Union Pacific Railroad Company in 1898.

The Union Pacific Railroad reached Abilene in March, 1867, and was the only railroad to serve Abilene until 1887. "The first train that carried passengers passed through Abilene in June, 1867. The country seemed a barren waste. There was nothing to ship either in or out. In 1870 the Kansas Pacific sold about 45,000 acres of land to settlers from various parts of the east, Dickinson county getting but few of the new comers....." (Abilene Daily Reflector, 28 June 1929)

Between 1868 and 1872 Abilene was the center of the Texas longhorn cattle trade, and was Kansas' first railroad cow town. The first Union Pacific Railroad shipment of Texas longhorn cattle from Abilene was in September, 1867. About 35,000 Texas longhorn cattle were driven to Abilene in 1867, most of these were shipped to the Chicago markets on the Union Pacific Railroad line. Between 1867 and 1872 three million head of Texas longhorn cattle were shipped from Abilene to Chicago and other eastern markets along the Union Pacific Railroad line.

In February 1872, the Farmers/ Protective Association circulated a petition to stop Abilene's cattle trade; three-quarters of the citizens of Dickinson County signed the petition. The petition requested that the Texas drovers "seek some other point for shipment, as the inhabitants of Dickinson county will no longer submit to the evils of the trade." (Abilene Chronicle, 22 February 1872)

Newton, and then Wichita, replaced Abilene as the principle cattle market after Abilene's definitive rejection of the drovers and their herds. Both communities had a direct connection to Chicago and were served by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. The continuing colonization of the railroad lands shifted the shipping points farther and farther west. In the mid-1870s Ellsworth served as a shipping point along the Union Pacific line, but was surpassed by Hays in the late 1870s. Along the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe line, Great Bend served as a major shipping point in the mid-1870s, but was surpassed by Dodge City in the late 1870s. The Kansas cattle trails were closed by 1885, henceforth all cattle was shipped to Kansas by rail.

After 1872 Abilene's financial base shifted to a diversified, agriculturally dependent economy. By 1880 Abilene boasted a population of 2,360. The town boomed again in 1887 with the arrival of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway lines, Abilene's population rose to 5,000 residents in 1888. However, the bottom fell out of the local economy in 1888, causing inflated land values to plunge. Abilene recovered from its economic setback by the mid-1890s, establishing a solid foundation for future development. In 1929, the year that the Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Passenger and Freight depots were completed, livestock, grain (wheat, oats, and corn) and its products, poultry, melons and dairy products comprised the basis of Abilene's agricultural economy.

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Abilene's first Union Pacific Railroad depot was a small frame structure located north of Texas Street. The depot was constructed in 1869, the year that Abilene was incorporated as a third class city. In 1880, the Union Pacific Railroad replaced the depot with a four story, frame hotel that included a restaurant and a depot. The Henry House Hotel, later Stanton House, was razed along with the original depot (the baggage and express depot), and the freight house in 1928. Union Pacific Railroad president Carl R. Gray wrote of the hotel in a 1928 memorandum that, "This structure is now in poor condition and is very unsatisfactory for handling passenger business. It is also unsatisfactory for hotel business and is used very little. Other hotels have been built in the city and one owned by the Railroad Company is no longer necessary." (Memorandum by President, 3 March 1928)

President Gray further explained the rationale for constructing new facilities in Abilene in the 1928 memorandum:

Abilene is a good revenue producing station, both in freight and passenger, and justifies modern facilities.

The Santa Fe serves this town with a branch line. Last year they opened a new freight and passenger station costing \$125,000, which is located considerably farther away than our facilities from the business district. Our facilities are right uptown, and we have worked out a splendid arrangement for the new freight and passenger stations which will become an integral part of the business district.

The citizens of Abilene have been pressing us for a number of years for new station facilities but we have been holding them off now for about as long as their patience will endure. If we construct new stations they have agreed to close three traveled street crossings, two of which are paved business streets. (Memorandum by President, 3 March 1928)

The 1927 construction of the new Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad facilities evidently provided the stimulus for the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad's new Abilene facilities. Additionally, the company could afford the expenditure. During the 1920s, the "rich and powerful" Union Pacific Railroad "erected high quality and architecturally attractive stations throughout Kansas and its far-flung system....creating custom designs for both combinations and passenger-only facilities." (Grant, 1990, p. 71)

The Los Angeles, California architectural and engineering firm of Gilbert Stanley Underwood and Company was retained by the Union Pacific Railroad to design the new complex. Underwood's firm designed at least twenty small or moderately sized passenger and freight depots for the Union Pacific Railroad between 1924 and 1931, including the extant passenger depots in Topeka (c. 1928) and Marysville, Kansas (c. 1930). In a 1930 article entitled "The Design of Small Railway Stations" written for Architectural Forum Underwood states that, "Our own firm has developed a great

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number of standards, but each of them may be changed by differing conditions on one railroad or by different railroads....On the Union Pacific system, for instance, we have developed a somewhat different style for each of the different railroads forming the system." (Underwood, 1930, pp. 695-696)

In "The Design of Small Railway Stations" Underwood outlines the concept which was used for the new Abilene facility. "There is publicity value in the location of a station at the end of a main street, and there is the more important advantage of allowing approaching traffic to divide naturally, the passenger motor traffic going to a parking space at one end of the building, the baggage and express traffic to the opposite end, and the passenger pedestrian traffic directly to the waiting room at the center..." (Underwood, 1930, p. 695)

The Underwood plan for the new Abilene facility created such a terminus, with the passenger depot at the end of two main streets. Broadway and Spruce streets were terminated at Second Street, resulting in a three block long tract of land north of the railroad tracts between Cedar and Buckeye streets that would contain the passenger depot. The freight depot was moved north across the tracks to stand just west of the passenger depot, at the intersection of Cedar and Second Streets.

The new Abilene Union Pacific Railroad facility included the construction of the passenger depot, the freight depot, a brick platform which ran from Cedar to Buckeye streets, landscape gardening, and some changes to the tracks and paving. The project cost the railroad approximately \$150,000.

A brick platform or walk twelve feet wide extends over the whole distance from Cedar to Buckeye. For the length of the station, it is 40 feet wide, this being the distance at which the building is placed from the track. Since it is of brick, it is attractive and enduring. A line of decorative standards provide ample illumination along the platform.

The structural material of the new buildings is light buff brick trimmed with terra cotta and roofed with light red tile. The windows have been strikingly designed, the glass area being divided into many diamond-shaped segments. The colors and lines of the buildings, when set off against an expanse of green lawn and shrubbery, will provide a place of outstanding beauty in Abilene.

The passenger depot is 184 1/2 feet long and 31 1/2 feet wide, form most of its length. The waiting room, occupying the central portion, is 51 feet, 5 inches long. The ticket office extends into this from the south side next the tracks.

In the east end of the depot are smoking room for men and a rest room for women, each with a wash room adjoining. An open air waiting room, included under the main roof of the depot, lies at the extreme east of the building.

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The baggage rooms, telephone and express offices are in the west portion. A basement has also been constructed under this part housing the heating plant and coal supply.

The floor of the new waiting room is of cement, divided into segments to give the effect of tiling and specially treated for color and hardness. There is wooden wainscoting for a height of three feet above the floor, the walls from there up being finished in a mottled tinting. The lighting fixtures have been especially designed.

The new freight station is 154 feet long (sic), and has an office 32 feet long and 30 feet wide located at the east end, with the entrance at Cedar street. The steps leading to the office provide an attractive feature, and have a decorative iron railing. (Abilene Daily Reflector, 28 June 1929)

Underwood chose the Spanish Colonial Revival style for both the passenger and freight depot at Abilene. Influenced by the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and his apprenticeship with California architect Arthur Benton, Underwood worked frequently with the Spanish Colonial Revival style in depot design. It was a style that he "handled....exceptionally well." (Zaitlin, 1987, p. 114)

Gilbert Stanley Underwood (1890-1960) spent his youth in San Bernardino, California. He joined Arthur Benton's southern California architectural practice as an apprentice in 1911, and enrolled in the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana the following year. He did not complete his studies at Champaign-Urbana, rather he received his bachelors in architecture from Yale University in 1920. Awarded a scholarship to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he could not afford to take his family to Paris with him, and instead, pursued graduate study at Harvard University, winning the Avery Prize and receiving his masters degree in architecture in 1923.

Underwood moved to Los Angeles with his family in 1923 and established Gilbert Stanley Underwood, Architects and Engineers, at 408 Spring Street. During the next nine years Underwood's small firm established itself as a designer of railroad depots and National Park lodges.

Underwood applied very effective interpretations of the Spanish Colonial Revival and the Art Deco styles to the railroad depots designed for the Union Pacific Railroad between 1924 and 1931, although he also worked well with the Classical Revival style. Underwood's most prominent railroad commission is the Omaha Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Station (c. 1930). "As the country's first Art Deco station, it naturally attracted attention for both the railroad company as well as its designer and, as planned, gave the Union Pacific the image of a company involved with the very latest technology." (Zaitlin, 1989, p. 126)

Underwood is best known for the Ahwanee Hotel (c. 1927) at Yosemite National Park. His firm also designed the lodges at Bryce, Zion, and the Grand Canyon National Parks during the 1920s. These structures were designed according to the principles of Rustic Architecture developed by the

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National Park Service in 1916. "Underwood worked closely with the directors of the Park Service to produce a unique architectural interpretation of that agency's goals." (Zaitlin, 1989, p. xi)

In 1932 Underwood became a consulting architect for the federal government, and later served as Supervising Architect for the United States between 1945 and 1949. Over the course of his twenty year career with the federal government, he designed over 20 post offices, two large courthouses, a mint, an appraiser's building, and the War Department building. However, throughout his years with the federal government, Underwood "continued to seek commissions unrelated to his federal employment" such as the lodges at Sun Valley, Idaho and Williamsburg, Virginia. (Zaitlin, 1989, p. 133) Of Underwood's career with the federal government Zaitlin writes that, "the longer Underwood remained with the federal government the more his work displayed the lean and efficient characteristics of the federal architecture than popular." (Zaitlin, 1989, p. 144)

In 1929, Union Pacific Railroad passenger service to Abilene consisted of seven trains daily. Passenger service to Abilene along the Union Pacific Railroad line was transferred to Amtrak in 1971 and discontinued shortly thereafter. The freight depot was closed in the mid-1970s. Abilene Iron and Metal purchased the freight depot from the Union Pacific Railroad in 1974. The building was sold to Gordon Davis, Jr. in 1980. Davis sold the building to Tim Geske in November, 1987. Geske, a painting contractor, utilizes the space for his business, Geske Interiors. The Union Pacific retains ownership of the land that the freight depot stands on, Geske leases the land from the railroad. A concrete platform and ramp extend 100 feet from the west side of the building, this improvement is not included in the boundary area of the nomination.

The Abilene Union Pacific Railroad Freight Depot maintains a high degree of architectural and structural integrity. The freight depot stands as a symbol of the growth and development of Abilene and as an architecturally significant example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style depot type constructed by the Union Pacific Railroad in the 1920s.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated property is located on the NW 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, S. 16, T. 13S, R. 2E, in Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas. The property is bounded to the north by North Second Street, to the east by Cedar Street, to the south by the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, and to the west by adjacent property lines. The nominated property stands at the intersection of Cedar and North Second Streets, on a tract measuring 173 feet from east to west and 38 feet from north to south, and includes the building and the covered platform that spans its southern elevation. The ell-shaped concrete platform and ramp that extend 100 feet from the western side of the building are not included in the nomination. The Union Pacific Railroad tracks that bound the property to the south are active.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary includes all property historically associated with the freight depot, with the exception of the ell-shaped concrete platform and ramp that extend 100 feet from the western side of the building. The passenger depot mentioned in the text was nominated under separate cover.



UTM COORDINATES  
 UNION PACIFIC  
 FREIGHT DEPOT  
 ABILENE Quad  
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